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Message Text

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FOR CARTER FROM S/PRS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJECT: TRAVELING PRESS SUMMARY, WEDNESDAY EVENING, FEB 16

NO. 10

1. WIRES. ALL THREE, IN AFTERNOON STORIES, CONCENTRATED ON RABIN COMMENTS TO PRESS AFTER MEETINGS WITH VANCE.

AP (SCHWEID) FROM JERUSALEM LED BY QUOTING RABIN, AFTER MEETING WITH VANCE, THAT ISRAEL IS WILLING TO JOIN MIDDLE EAST PEACE TALKS BUT ONLY WITHOUT PLO ATTENDANCE. SCHWEID REPORTED RABIN AS SAYING "WE ARE MORE THAN READY TO COOPERATE WITH THE PRESIDENT TO BRING ABOUT SUCH A CONFERENCE' AND ADDED THAT RABIN HAD ACCEPTED INVITATION FROM VANCE TO VISIT U.S. WITHIN NEXT SIX WEEKS. RABIN ALSO REPORTED AS TELLING PRESS AFTER VANCE MEETING THAT HE DISPUTED USG VIEW THAT ARAB ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAEL HAD MODERATED. "ARAB GOALS", RABIN IS QUOTED AS SAYING, "ARE SOMETHING
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THAT IS LESS THAN PEACE--TOTAL WITHDRAWAL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ARAFAT STATE IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP, CONDITIONS WHICH ARE TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO ISRAEL". SCHWEID REPORTED VANCE TOLD ISRAELI LEADERS THAT U.S. WANTS PEACE TALKS BY SECOND HALF OF 1977 BUT WOULD ALSO CONTINUE TO REFUSE TO DEAL WITH PLO AS LONG AS IT DID NOT RECOGNIZE

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ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST.

UPI (ANDERSON) FROM JERUSALEM LED BY STATING THAT VANCE'S FIRST DAY OF TALKS WITH ISRAELIS BROUGHT "SOME APPARENT DIFFERENCES TO THE SURFACE, BUT ISRAELI LEADERS SAID THEY REMAIN CONVINCED OF FUNDAMENTAL U.S. SUPPORT,. ANDERSON SAID RABIN TOLD REPORTERS AFTER SECOND MEETING WEDNESDAY WITH VANCE THAT U.S. COMMITMENT TO STRENGTH OF ISRAEL "IS VALID, EFFECTIVE AND WILL BE IMPLEMENTED". RABIN LATER TOLD ISRAELI REPORTERS, HOWEVER, THAT "I CANNOT SAY WE GOT ALL THE ANSWERS WE HOPED FOR", WROTE ANDERSON. HE ADDED: "RABIN INDICATED THAT ARAB STATES' MODERATION IN DEALING WITH THE GREAT POWERS HAD NOT EXTENDED TO THEIR RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL", AND QUOTED RABIN THAT "PERHAPS THERE IS A CHANGE IN THEIR METHODS, BUT THEIR GOALS, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, REMAIN THE SAME". IN AN EARLIER STORY, ANDERSON SAID RABIN SUMMED UP "DIFFICULTIES" OF FIRS DAY'S TALKS IN SAYING ISRAEL WAS READY TO COOPERATE IN GETTING PEACE TALKS MOVING AGAIN "WITHIN LIMITATIONS". MAIN STUMBLING BLOCK, SAID ANDERSON, WAS QUESTION OF PLO PRESENCE AT RECONVENED TALKS. WHILE VANCE HAD SAID EARLIER THAT THE ARABS HAD ADOPTED A MORE FLEXIBLE AND MODERATE ATTITUDE ON THIS MATTER, WROTE ANDERSON, RABIN SAID AFTER HIS TALKS WITH VANCE THAT "ONE HAS TO DISTIN-GUISH" BETWEEN ARAB RELATIONS WITH THE GREAT POWERS AND ARAB RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. RABIN LISTED THREE MAIN ARAB GOALS---"SOMETHING LESS THAN TOTAL PEACE WITH ISRAEL; TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES AND ESTABLISHMENT OF ARAFAT STATE ON WEST BANK AND GAZA
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STRIP". ON SUBJECT OF CBU, ANDERSON QUOTED RABIN THAT U.S. DECISION WHETHER TO SUPPLY IT TO ISRAEL IS STILL UNDER REVIEW, AND THAT VANCE HAD TOLD ISRAELIS PRESIDENT CARTER HAS NOT YET REACHED A DECISION.

LEAD IN REUTERS UNSIGNED PIECE FROM JERUSALEM: "PRIME MINISTER RABIN TODAY SAID ISRAEL AND THE U.S. AGREED ON THE NEED TO RECONVENE THE GENEVA...CONFERENCE, PRESUMABLY IN THE LATTER HALF OF THIS YEAR". OTHER POINTS:

--- RABIN MADE NO MENTION OF PREVIOUS HOPES THAT U.S. WOULD ACT AS SOLE MEDIATOR IN MIDDLE EAST.

--- NEITHER RABIN NOR VANCE, WHO SPOKE SHORTLY BEFORE, GAVE ANY INDICATION HOW THE TWO COUNTRIES HOPED TO OVER-COME PROBLEM OF PLO REPRESENTATION AT RECONVENED CON-FERENCE.

--- RABIN SAID THERE WERE NO MAJOR ISSUES ON WHICH U.S.

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AND ISRAEL DIFFERED, AND THAT HE HAD BEEN INVITED TO VISIT

PRESIDENT CARTER IN THE FIRST HALF OF NEXT MONTH.

--- VANCE WAS "MORE CIRCUMSPECT" IN DESCRIBING MEETING WITH RABIN, SAYING IT WAS "THOROUGH, HELPFUL AND USEFUL."

--- RABIN SAID THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN ISRAEL'S POSITION ON PLO AT GENEVA CONFERENCE. ASKED A SIMILAR QUESTION ABOUT U.S. ATTITUDES TOWARD PLO, VANCE SAID "THE ANSWER IS ALSO NO".

--- ONE "DIFFICULT BILATERAL ISSUE" RAISED BY VANCE WAS ISRAELI OIL EXPLORATION IN GULF OF SUEZ. ISRAELI SOURCES SAID VANCE ASKED ISRAELIS TO ALLOW AMOCO TO CARRY OUT DRILLING ON BASIS OF LEASE GRANTED BY EGYPT IN 1964 AND 1967, SAYING ISRAEL DID NOT HAVE LEGAL RIGHT TO CARRY OUT
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EXPLORATION THERE. SOURCES SAID THAT, IN REPLY TO THIS, LEGAL ADVISER OF ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY SAID HE HAD 'ANOTHER DOCUMENT WHICH COMES TO THE OPPOSITE CONCLUSION". TO WHICH VANCE, ACCORDING TO SOURCES, REPLIED: "DID YOU EVER SEE TWO LAWYERS AGREE WITH EACH OTHER?"

--- ISRAELI SOURCES SAID VANCE TOLD ISRAELIS PRESIDENT CARTER PLANNED TO DELAY DECISION ON CBU UNTIL AFTER VANCE RETURNS TO WASHINGTON. ISRAELIS WERE TOLD THAT ANY DECISION AT THIS TIME WOULD "UNDERMINE" VANCE'S TRIP. SOURCES ADDED THAT OFFICIALS IN JERUSALEM BELIEVE U.S. WILL DECIDE AGAINST SALE.

--- RABIN "CONFIRMED TO REPORTERS" THAT VANCE ASSURED HIM CARTER ADMINISTRATION PLANS TO REQUEST ADDITIONAL 285 MILLION DOLLARS IN AID TO ISRAEL ON TOP OF 1.5 BILLION REQUESTED BY FORD ADMINISTRATION.

--- RABIN SAID MAJOR ISSUES BETWEEN U.S. AND ISRAEL ARE GOALS OF DIPLOMATIC EFFORT, U.S. MILITARY SUPPORT AND U.S. FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

2. NO REPORT FROM WALLACH OF HEARST.

3. NETWORK TELEVISION: NBC'S BRINKLEY: SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE, TOURING THE MIDDLE EAST, STOPPED FIRST IN ISRAEL, WHERE THE MESSAGE HE GOT WAS THIS: THE ISRAELIS ARE WILLING TO JOIN IN PEACE TALKS, BUT NOT IF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION IS THERE. PRIME MINISTER RABIN SAID OF THAT QUESTION "THE ANSWER SIMPLY IS NO". VANCE GOES ON TO THE ARAB STATES.

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(NOTHING FROM VALERIANI).

CBS' CRONKITE: ISRAELI OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD A VISITING SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN MIDEAST TALKSBUT ONLY IF PLO IS EXCLUDED. MORE
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ON THE STORY FROM BERNARD KALB IN JERUSALEM.

KALB: SECRETARY VANCE BEGAN HIS EXPLORATORY TALKS TODAY ON THE POSSIBILITY OF RECONVENING A MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE. PRIME MINISTER RABIN TOLD HIM THAT ISRAEL HAS NO PROOF TO SUPPORT A RECENT REFERENCE BY THE SECRETARY TO WHAT HE CALLED INCREASING TALK OF PALESTINIAN MODERATION, SOMETHING VANCE WANTS TO EXPLORE ON THIS TRIP. AS FAR AS THE ISRAELI ARE CONCERNED, THE PLO REMAINS COMMITTED TO ISRAEL'S DESTRUCTION. DURING SEVERAL HOURS OF TALKS, VANCE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH ISRAEL'S PERCEPTION OF REALITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

VANCE: "I THINK THAT I NOW HAVE A MUCH CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF THE POSITION OF ISRAEL WITH RESPECT TO A NUMBER OF ISSUES RELATING TO THE SEARCH FOR PEACE.,

A SEQUENCE FOLLOWED IN WHICH RABIN WAS QUESTIONED BY PRESS WHETHER ISRAEL'S ATTITUDE ON PLO AS A NEGOTIATING PARTNER HAD CHANGED. RABIN REPLIED: "THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE---NO". VANCE, ASKED IF THE U.S. ATTITUDE HAD CHANGED, REPLIED: "THE ANSWER IS NO".

KALB: IN DISCUSSING BILATERAL ISSUES, THE ISRAELIS FAILED TO GET THE U.S. TO LIFT ITS BAN ON THE SALE OF ISRAELI FIGHTER PLANES WITH U.S. ENGINES TO ECUADOR. AND THE ISRAELIS PRIVATELY FORECAST SOME PROBLEMS IF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION REVERSES A FORD ADMINISTRATION PROMISE TO SELL ISRAEL CONCUSSION BOMBS. VANCE ALSO MET WITH ISRAEL'S ELDER STATESWOMAN, FORMER PRIME MINISTER GOLDA MEIR. LATER A MEETING WITH DEFENSE MINISTER SHIMON PERES TO DISCUSS THE MIDDLE EAST MILITARY SITUATION. AND FINALLY, THE ISRAELIS HONORED SECRETARY VANCE WITH A FAREWELL DINNER PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE TOMORROW FOR EGYPT.

ABC CARRIED SPOT FROM DUNSMORE WHICH WAS LARGELY SCENES
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FROM VANCE VISIT TO ISRAELI MEMORIAL SHRINE FOR WAR DEAD

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AND CONFERENCE ROOM SHOTS. NARRATION DID NOT DIFFER SUB-
STANTIALLY FROM KALB AND WIRE SERVICE REPORTING. THIS
WAS FOLLOWED BY PIECE FROM BILL SEAMANS IN JERUSALEM
POINTING UP DIFFERENCES OF STYLE BETWEEN VANCE
AND KISSINGER AS VISITORS TO MIDDLE EAST.

4. LATE STORY FROM AP'S SCHWEID LED BY STATING THAT
ISRAELI OFFICIALS (MEANING ALLON) TOLD VANCE THEY ARE
READY TO TALK PEACE WITH "AUTHENTIC LEADERS" OF THE

PALENSTINIAN COMMUNITY" BUT NOT WITH THE PLO.
OTHER POINTS:

--- VANCE BACKED THE POSITION, TELLING REPORTERS THAT AS
LONG AS THE PLO STANDS BY ITS COVENANT CALLING FOR
ABOLITION OF ISRAEL IT CAN PLAY NO PART IN SETTLEMENT.

--- ALLON SAID HE COULD ENVISAGE "INFORMAL PRELIMINARY
CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL, JORDAN AND AUTHENTIC LEADERS
OF THE PALESTINIAN ARAB COMMUNITY IN THE WEST BANK AS TO
HOW BEST THEIR CAUSE CAN BE REPRESENTED IN JOINT DELEGATION
WITH THE JORDANIANS."
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